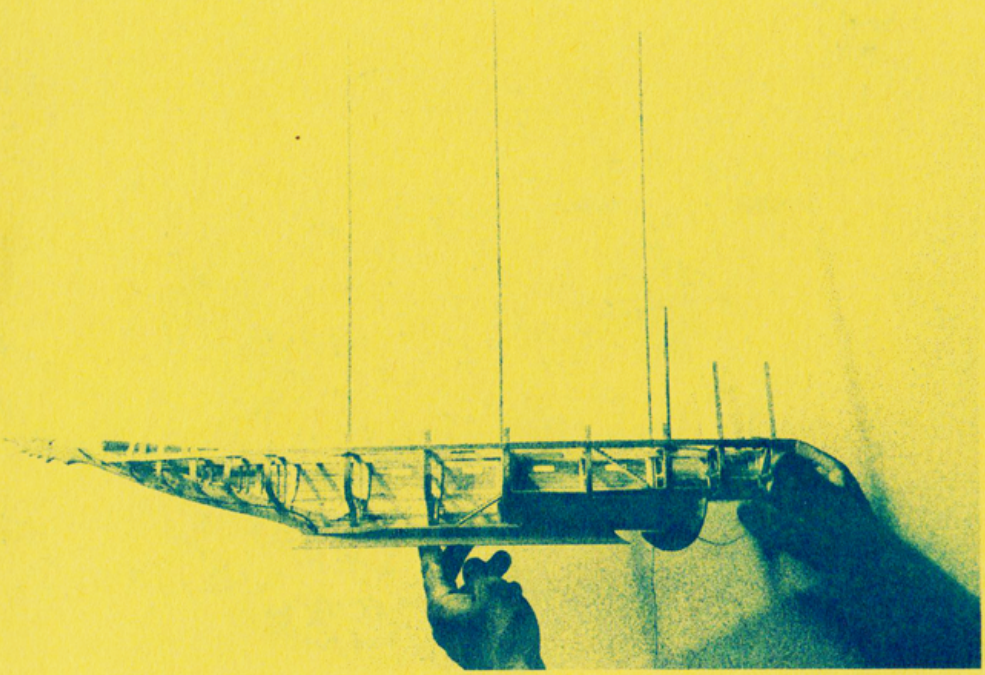
Between the Borders

episode #2. 2014



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We are a group of people, with and without citizenship in the UK and hailing from many different places, who meet to learn from one another, exchange and develope ideas, support each other in producing written work and other forms of cultural articulation.

Between the Borders have been coming together since 2012 to imagine ways we can work towards improving the experiences of asylum seekers and new migrants in Liverpool, to encourage cross cultural engagement and challenge our own and other peoples preconceptions and misinformation.

With this publication we aim to open up a dialogue about the complex structures surrounding contemporary asylum and migration. We seek to build and maintain a platform for many varied voices and perspectives to express their experiences, their histories and their hopes for the future. Crucially, in the words of a friend

"Those who are and have been voices for justice, should be supported in exile."

This publication aims to celebrate the spectrum of positive contributions made to our shared society. Episode #2 is the product of many people, to whom we would like to say many thanks.....Alhussein Ahmed, Anastasia Akerman, Askavusa Associazione Culturale, Katherine Ball, Pa Modou Bojang, Ken Clarke, Reza Faghihi, Footprint Printers, Collette Foy, Steve Gent, Grace Harrison, Bob Jones, JONZO Printers, Yogob Juma, Zainab Kaye, Ulysse Di Meglio, Migrant Artist Mutual Aid, Honorata Mikolajew, Luca Milazzo, Muhammad Mostafa, MPAC, Oliver Pitt, Mehdi Pourdalir, SOLA ARTS, Laura Spark, Michael Tella, Theo Temple, Ehsan Vaziri, visAvis, Sherco Zrebar.

Find *Between the Borders* on Facebook
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Editorial; Episode 2, June 2014

Dear Reader,

We are writing this a week after the European elections, which saw record numbers of seats won by far right and nationalistic parties in several countries. Britain, like many European nations, has a long and complex history of people moving, or being moved to and from its' shores, and this movement can be easily mapped along the times of the boom and bust necessary to capitalist economies. Despite the predicable repetition of this larger picture, these periods of economic decline, such as we are currently experiencing, still commonly result in villianisation of different migrant peoples in the misguided search for who to blame. We believe our holding and acting upon these thoughts, however fleeting can have tangible consequences for people in real need of assistance and humanity.

With the UK-wide Refugee Week commencing on the 16th of June, we wanted this Episode to bring into focus the many misunderstandings in our society about the numbers and experiences of people who come to this country to claim asylum. To seek asylum simply means that you have fled your country and are asking another state to recognise that you are a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Refugee Convention. This convention requires states that have signed it to grant protection to individuals who have a well-founded fear of being persecuted in their own country on one of five grounds: race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group.

Although the requirement to fulfill the obligations of this convention are often perceived as a huge challenge for the UK, asylum seekers make up only a fraction of the total numbers of migrants to the UK. Asylum is estimated to account for only about 7% of net migration to the UK. The UK takes in fewer than 2% of the world's asylum seekers; four fifths of the world's refugees live in developing countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. For instance, while 0.3% of the UK's population are refugees, 25% of people in Lebanon are refugees. Asylum seekers arriving in the UK are typically fleeing severe human rights abuses. They are the most vulnerable of all those who come to the UK.

Between The Borders continually wishes to shed light on, as well as question our perceptions on Asylum and migration, while working alongside those with shared practices and motivations.

Festival 31 was initiated by SOLA ARTS with the aim of being Liverpool's first official festival celebrating arts & culture from refugee communities. inspired by the talents of refugees and the lack of opportunity for shared experience and understanding between refugees and people from the

wider Liverpool communities. The aim is to widen the discussion & dialogue in Merseyside around the refugee experience. The festival hopes to bring together refugees and the wider communities, individuals, grassroots, small and larger organisations for a 31-day experience across the city.

Beginning 16th June, the first day of Refugee Week, and finishing July 16th 2014. It began from a seed idea and has had fantastic support from many of SOLA's current and past partners and grassroots supporters. "It marks the beginning of something wonderful."

SOLA ARTS began in 2004 as a response to a call for a community based creative provision in Liverpool for refugees and asylum seekers. Having started through a collaboration between creative refugees and other local artists resident in Merseyside the group has flourished. Now in its tenth year, SOLA ARTS is Merseyside's leading refugee arts organisation with strong local and national presence in support of refugees, integration and mental wellbeing through the arts.

Festival 31 events include street based and touring photography exhibition by the acclaimed photojournalist Howard Davies, Collective Encounters Youth Theatre production 'Transparent Truths' about human trafficking, Gorilla Readers project supporting the creation of children's stories by refugee women and film screenings from Liverpool Radical Documentary Film Festival, plus many more events detailed on the map and insert found in this issue.

With so many groups putting time and energy into the events programmed during Refugee Week and Festival 31, we at Between the Borders wanted to promote and support their activity by helping to produce a calendar of events and a map. We hope the articles and contributions in this publication will serve as a companion to, and extension of, Festival 31, opening a reflective space, where we can really deepen and question our understanding of the complex narratives and discourse here in Liverpool and elsewhere.

Featured in this episode is work from the Between the Borders writing group as well as accounts from artists working in different cultural contexts. We have a report from the Island of Lampedusa and their specific struggles as well as one on Women in the asylum system. Throughout we have a series of pictograms from the 'Visual Vocabulary for Refugee Protest Vienna. 2013', As well as other creative contributions and reflections which we hope will make for informative and inspirational reading.

Éditorial; Épisode 2, June 2014

Cher Lecteur,

Nous écrivons cette semaine après les élections européenne, qui ont vu un nombre record de sièges remportés par l'extrême droite et les partis nationalistes dans plusieurs pays. Le Royaume-Uni, comme beaucoup de nations européennes, a une longue et complexe histoire de gens qui se déplacent, ou qui ont été deplacés, et ces movements peuvent facilement être planifiés selon les périodes nécessaires d'expansion et de récession des économies capitalistes. Malgré la prévisible répétition de cet enchaînement, ces périodes de déclin économique - comme celle que nous vivons actuellement - causent, toujours encore, une stigmatisation généralisée de certains migrants, toujours dans une recherche inepte d'un bouc émissaire. Nous pensons que notre engagement et notre action face à ces idées, peuvent avoir des conséquences tangibles pour les personnes en réel besoin d'assistance et d'humanité.

Avec la 'Refugee Week' qui commence le 16 juin au Royaume-Uni, nous voulons dans cette édition attirer l'attention sur les nombreux malentendus que l'on rencontre dans notre société concernant les expériences et le nombre de personnes venus dans ce pays demander le droit d'asile. Rechercher l'asile signifie simplement que vous avez fuit votre pays et que vous demandez à un autre état de reconnaitre que vous êtes réfugié selon les termes de la Convention sur le Statut des Réfugiés de 1951. Cette convention engage les états signataires à garantir la protection des individus qui ont une peur fondée d'être persécuté dans leur pays sur la base d'au moins un des cinq critères suivants : l'appartenance ethnique, la religion, la nationalité, l'opinion politique, ou l'appartenance à un groupe social particulier.

Bien que l'application de ces obligations est souvent percue comme un énorme défi pour le Royaume-Uni, les demandeurs d'asile ne sont qu'une fraction de l'ensemble des migrants dans le pays. Les demandeurs d'asile ne représentent en fait qu'environ 7% de la migration nette au Royaume-Uni. Le Royaume-Uni recoit moins de 2% des demandeurs d'asile dans le monde ; 80% des réfugiés se trouvent dans les pays en développement, en Afrique, en Asie et au Moyen-Orient. Par exemple, la part de réfugiés dans la population totale au Royaume-Uni est de 0,3%, alors qu'elle est de 25% au Liban. Typiquement, les demandeurs d'asile arrivant au Royaume-Uni ont été victimes ou sont en proie à des violations des Droits de l'Homme. Ils sont les plus vulnérables de tout ceux qui viennent au Royaune-Uni.

Between The Borders (Entre les frontières) a à la fois la vocation d'éclairer et de questioner nos perceptions sur le droit d'asile et la migration, tout en travaillant avec les personnes concernées, partageant leurs expériences et leurs motivations.

Festival 31 est organisé par SOLA ARTS et a l'objectif d'être le premier festival officiel célébrant les arts et les cultures émanant des communautés de réfugiés. L'organisation de ce festival est tant à la fois suscitée par les talents des réfugiés mais aussi par le manque notable d'expériences partagées et de compréhension entre les réfugiés et le reste de Liverpool. Le but est d'élargir la discussion et le dialogue dans le Merseyside autour de l'expérience des réfugiés.

Le festival espère rassembler les réfugiés avec d'autres communautées, d'autres individus, ainsi qu'avec des organisations plus ou moins grande, lors d'évènements rythmant la ville pendant 31 jours, Commencant le 16 juin, le premier jour de la Refugee Week, le festival finira le 16 juillet 2014.L'idée est partie de rien puis a recu une énergie fantastique impulsée par beaucoup de gens de SOLA ART, ainsi que par d'autres acteurs locaux. "C'est le début de quelque chose de merveilleux".

SOLA ARTS a commencé en 2004, suite a une demande importante d'une structure créative de la part des réfugiés et des demandeurs d'asile. Initié par une collaboration entre des réfugiés et des artistes locaux du Merseyside, le groupe s'est peu a peu élargit. Fêtant maintenant son dixième anniversaire, SOLA ART est dans le Merseyside l'organisation artistique principale des réfugiés ayant une forte présence locale et nationale et s'impliquant dans l'intégration et le bien-être mental des réfugiés a travers l'art.

Le Festival 31 comprendra une exposition photo plein air autour d'un circuit par le photojournaliste Howard Davies ; un film par Collective Encounters Youth Theatre, 'Transparent Truths' à propos du traffic d'humains ; Gorilla Readers, un projet encourageant le récit d'histoires d'enfants, porté par des femmes refugiées, des films présentés par le Liverpool Radical Documentary Film Festival, et bien d'autres évènements annoncés sur la carte détaillée que vous trouverez dans ce numéro.

Avec tout ces groupes s'impliquant dans les évènements de la Refugee Week et du Festival 31, nous avons voulu a Between the Borders promouvoir et encourager cette activité par la production d'un calendrier et d'une carte des évènements. Nous espèrons que les articles et les contributions de cette publication serviront de compagnon au Festival 31, qui sera l'occasion d'approfondir notre compréhension des narrations et des discours complexes de Liverpool et d'ailleurs.

Vous trouverez dans cette édition le fruit du travail du groupe d'écriture Between the Borders, ainsi que des contributions d'artistes provenant de différents milieux. Nous présentons un dossier portant sur l'ile de Lampedusa ainsi qu'un dossier s'intéressant aux femmes dans le système de la demande d'asile. En parcourant ce numéro, vous trouverez aussi une série de pictogrammes 'Visual Vocabulary for Refugee Protest Vienna. 2013', ainsi que d'autres contributions créatives et réflexions qui, nous l'espèrons, vous informerons et vous inspirerons.

ويأمل المهرجان إلى الجمع بين اللاجئين والمجتمعات المحلية على نطاق أوسع، والأفراد، على مستوى القاعدة، والمنظمات الصغيرة والكبيرة للحصول على تجربة 31 يوما في جميع أنحاء المدينة. تبدأ 16 يونيو، في اليوم الأول من الأسبوع اللاجئين، والانتهاء من 16 يوليو 2014، وبدأت من فكرة البذور وزارها دعما رائعا من العديد من الشركاء SOLA الحالية والسابقة وأنصار القاعدة. "إنه يمثل بداية لشيء رائع."

بدأت SOLA الفنون في عام 2004 كرد على دعوة لتقديم الإبداعية المجتمعية في ليفربول للاجئين وطالبي اللجوء. بعد أن بدأت من خلال التعاون بين اللاجئين الإبداعية وغيرها من الفنانين المقيمين المحليين في ميرسيساید ازدهرت المجموعة. الآن في عامها العاشر، SOLA الفنون هي الرائدة اللاجئين في منظمة ميرسيساید الفنون مع وجود المحلي وطنية قوية لدعم اللاجئين والتكامل والصحة النفسية من خلال الفنون.

وتشمل مهرجان 31 أحداث الشارع مقرها ومعرض التصوير الفوتوغرافي بجولة من قبل المصور الصحفي الشهير هوارد ديفيز، الجماعية إنتاج مسرح الشباب لقاءات "حقائق شفاف" حول الاتجار بالبشر، ومشروع القراء الغوريلا دعم إنشاء قصص الأطفال التي كتبها اللاجئات وعروض أفلام من ليفربول الراديكالي فيلم وثائقي المهرجان، بالإضافة إلى العديد من الأحداث المفصلة على الخريطة وجدت في إدراج هذه المسألة.

مع ذلك العديد من المجموعات وضع الوقت والطاقة في الأحداث المبرمجة خلال أسبوع اللاجئين ومهرجان 31، ونحن في بين حدود أراد لتعزيز ودعم نشاطهم من خلال المساعدة على إنتاج الجدول الزمني للأحداث وخريطة. نأمل أن المقالات والمساهمات في هذا المنشور بمثابة مصاحب ل، وتمديد، مهرجان 31. فتح الفضاء العاكسة، حيث يمكننا تعميق حقا والسؤال فهمنا للرواية معقدة والخطاب هنا في ليفربول وأماكن أخرى.

واردة في هذه الحلقة هو العمل من بين حدود الكتابة وكذلك مجموعة حسابات من الفنانين الذين يعملون في سياقات ثقافية مختلفة. لدينا تقرير من جزيرة لامبيدوسا وكفاحهم محددة فضلا عن واحدة على المرأة في نظام اللجوء. في جميع أنحاء لدينا سلسلة من الصور التوضيحية ضرب من 'المفردات البصرية لاحتجاج اللاجئين فيينا. 2013 "، فضلا عن المساهمات والأفكار التي نأمل أن تجعل للقراءة مفيدة وملهمة الإبداعية الأخرى.

ونحن نعتذر إذا كانت نوعية هذه الترجمة ليست جيدة جدا، إذا كان لديك المهارات اللازمة لمساعدتنا في الترجمة في المستقبل يرجى الاتصال بنا. وسيكون موضع أكثر تقدير.

FESTIVAL 31

التحرير؛ الحلقة 2، يونيو 2014

عزيزي القارئ،
نحن نكتب هذا بعد أسبوع من الانتخابات الأوروبية، التي شهدت أعدادا قياسية من المقاعد التي فاز بها الأحزاب اليمينية المتطرفة والقومية في عدة بلدان. بريطانيا، على غرار العديد من الدول الأوروبية ، لديها تاريخ طويل ومعقد من الناس تتحرك، أو نقله من وإلى ل'شواطئ؛ وهذه الحركة يمكن تعيين بسهولة على طول أوقات الازدهار والكساد اللازمة للاقتصادات الرأسمالية. على الرغم من التكرار المنتظم لهذه الصورة أكبر، هذه الفترات من التدهور الاقتصادي، مثل التي نشهدها حاليا، لا يزال يؤدي عادة في صنع الشرير الشعوب المهاجرين مختلفة في البحث عن الضالة الذين لإلقاء اللوم. فإننا نعتقد عقد وبناء على هذه الأفكار، ولكن يمكن أن يكون لها عواقب عابرة ملموسة للناس في حاجة حقيقية للمساعدة والإنسانية.

مع الأسبوع اللاجئين واسعة في المملكة المتحدة تبدأ في 16 يونيو، أردنا هذه الحلقة لتسليط كثير من سوء الفهم في مجتمعنا حول الأرقام والخبرات من الناس الذين يأتون إلى هذه البلاد لطلب اللجوء. لطلب اللجوء يعني ببساطة أن كنت قد هرب بلدك ويطلبون دولة أخرى لندرك أن كنت لاجئا وفقا لأحكام اتفاقية اللاجئين لعام 1951. هذه الاتفاقية تلزم الدول التي وقعت على منح الحماية للأفراد الذين لديهم خوف له ما يبرره من التعرض للاضطهاد في بلدهم على واحد من خمسة أسس: العرق، الدين، الجنسية، الرأي السياسي، أو الانتماء إلى فئة اجتماعية معينة.

على الرغم من أن اشتراط الوفاء بالالتزامات المترتبة على هذه الاتفاقية وغالبا ما ينظر إليها على أنها تشكل تحديا كبيرا للمملكة المتحدة وطالبي اللجوء يشكلون سوى جزء ضئيل من مجموع أعداد المهاجرين إلى المملكة المتحدة. ويقدر اللجوء لحساب فقط حوالي 7٪ من صافي الهجرة إلى المملكة المتحدة. المملكة المتحدة يأخذ في أقل من 2٪ من طالبي اللجوء في العالم؛ يعيش أربعة أخماس اللاجئين في العالم في البلدان النامية في أفريقيا وآسيا والشرق الأوسط. على سبيل المثال ، في حين أن 0.3٪ من سكان المملكة المتحدة هم من اللاجئين، و 25٪ من الناس في لبنان هم لاجئون. طالبي اللجوء الذين يصلون في المملكة المتحدة وعادة ما يفرون من الانتهاكات الخطيرة لحقوق الإنسان. هم الأكثر عرضة لجميع أولئك الذين يأتون إلى المملكة المتحدة.

"بين الحدود" يرغب باستمرار لتسليط الضوء على وكذلك مسألة تصوراتنا بشأن اللجوء والهجرة ، في حين تعمل جنبا إلى جنب مع تلك الممارسات والدوافع المشتركة.

وقد بدأ المهرجان 31 بواسطة SOLA الفنون بهدف كونها أول مهرجان رسمي ليفربول تحتفل الفنون والثقافة من مجتمعات اللاجئين. مستوحاة من المواهب اللاجئين وعدم وجود فرصة للتجربة المشتركة والتفاهم بين الناس من اللاجئين والمجتمعات ليفربول على نطاق أوسع. والهدف من ذلك هو توسيع النقاش والحوار في ميرسيسايد حول تجربة اللاجئين.

Why are we here?

WHAT REFUGEES FACE IN THEIR HOME COUNTRIES

Visual Vocabulary for Refugee Protest Vienna.
BY KATHERINE BALL

A series of pictograms collaboratively designed with refugees striking as part the Refugee Protest Vienna. Based around universal poison symbols the pictograms are designed to have multiple uses, and have been used as posters, banners and signs for demonstrations.

"THE ABSENT POEM"

By Honorata Mikolajew

There is a man	*Człowiek nie jest*
Inside me	*wewnątrz mnie*
And his name is	*A jego nazwa jest*
Stigmata	*stygmaty*
He laughs	*śmieje*
And feeds my	*I żywi moja*
Brain	*mózg*
With his echo	*Z jego echa*
There is a woman	*Kobieta jest*
Inside me	*wewnątrz mnie*
And her name is	*A jej nazwa jest*
Poland	*Polska*
She cries	*płacze*
And tears her hair out	*I łzy jej włosy*
From the absent	*Od nieobecny*
Thoughts	*myśli*
With the emptiness	*Z pustki*
There are They	*Są one*
Inside me	*wewnątrz mnie*
And I do not know	*I nie wiem,*
Their names	*ich nazwy*
They walk	*chodzą*
In the labyrinth	*W labiryncie*
Of unspoken words …	*Od niewypowiedzianych słów*
	...

Between Sips of Tea

Ehsan Vaziri wouldn't call himself an artist, but its hard not to refer to him as one after seeing his work.

The 29-year old Iranian is seeking asylum in Britain. We meet him in Edge Hill, where he lives in small bedsit.

Ehsan had studied to be an electrician but, as he tells us, **"I like to try many different things**" - painting, sculpture, carving and carpentry.

Before leaving Iran, Ehsan worked as a creative decorator and sculptor with his brother. He strikes you as the kind of person who looks for potential in anything. We ask about a set of hand-made shelves, and he tells us that he crafted them from a wooden pallet he found in the street.

Ehsan has lived in the UK for two years but, like all asylum seekers, he cannot earn his own living. Forbidden from working, Ehsan has found other ways to fill his time. He carefully hands us an intricate model ship he has made. Rows of curved coffee stirrers make up the hull. It is perfectly smooth.

Ehsan tells us that we are his first proper visitors. Between sips of tea, we talk about art, how he got here and the home he was forced to flee.

His journey was not an easy one. He travelled for six months before arriving at his destination, the UK.

He jokes that maybe the real reason he was building a model ship was an urge to build a life-raft and sail away.

Once in the UK, he was moved around a lot. At first in Croydon and then Blackburn, only to be rehoused in Liverpool numerous times before settling, for the moment, in Edge Hill. With greater security Ehsan has also found time for community.

He had recently attended a workshop where asylum seekers were encouraged to make a mask. He told us that the idea was to express something that mattered to you.

"At the beginning we didn't know what to say."

"Eventually someone said they wanted to talk about freedom - and we asked how can you show this in the mask."

"At the beginning it was difficult, But when everyone started to really think about it, they had lots of ideas and got really excited. From a small thing big ideas can grow."

We asked Ehsan about the mask he made.

"I thought about humanity - I put the flags around the mask to show all of the people living in this world all are human, all the same, without any colour."

"We are different nations and different languages, different things, but all of us have the same needs."

The finished masks were displayed in the Bluecoat gallery alongside portraits of their makers taken by the Iranian photographer, Liya, who is also seeking asylum. They took photographs with the masks in different locations to explore many meanings.

"When you travel you are facing forwards and also back."

His manner becomes grave when we ask about his home.

"It is easy to have a political problem in Iran, They [the Iranian state] are very strict, they believe theirs is the only way and there is no space for other opinions or philosophies."

Ehsan and his brother had felt the stifling grip of the state when they briefly worked as animators. They found their storyboards were never passed by the censor.

"You either leave Iran or you forget about your talent, artists are not free to show all of their talents because of the situation."

"Its true that artist have more freedom than say filmakers, because films are seen by everyone. But you still have to controle yourself. "

But, as he tells us, things were not always this way.

"Thirty years ago it was different, before the revolution, very open, like a European country"

He says most Iranians hope for a day when their country is returned to its former liberal state.

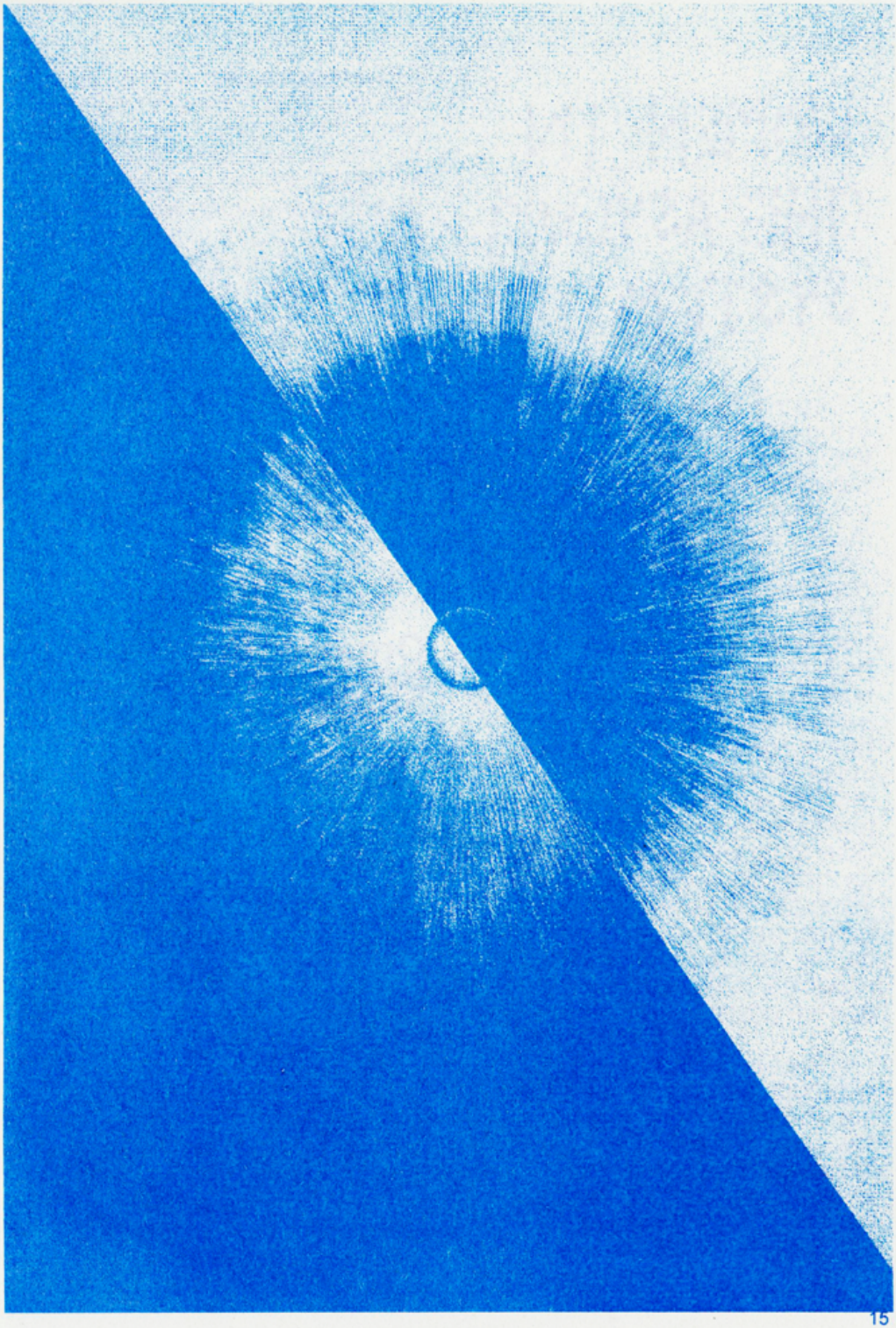
"But its not easy because people can't trust each other, they have their business, everyone wants to do their own business and they are afraid. Before the revolutions, they were good Muslims but had beautiful art, beautiful music, beautiful everything - Islam is not against this. But the new regime used Islam, changed the words to keep the people quiet."

Ehsan believes Islam is not to blame. Instead, the message is manipulated and used as a tool of control.

He uses the example of the religious conservatism which holds sway in contemporary Iran.

"the young people are often the ones who will challenge things because they have lots of energy"

"But for example, If you cant spend time with girls it's all you think about, so you're not thinking about what the state is doing."



Women in the Asylum System

One third of asylum seekers in the UK are women. Like men, they come to the UK seeking safety from persecution. But they're much more likely than men to have been raped, forced into marriage, or suffered domestic violence or 'honour' crimes. The UK conventions relating to the status of refugees have historically been interpreted through a framework of male experiences. The system often fails women in both the gathering of evidence and undertaking the correct procedures. This makes them disproportionally likely to receive poor decisions on their asylum claims. They're vulnerable to harassment and gender-based violence throughout the asylum process, especially if they are refused and left destitute.

In the UK there are a handful of groups and organisations who are working to draw attention to this unfair difference, as well as in supporting one another invaluably with determination, compassion and creativity.

The organisation Women for Refugee Women seeks to challenge the injustices experienced by women who seek asylum in the UK, as well as working to empower women who have sought sanctuary in the UK to speak out about their own experience to the media, to policy makers and at public events. In January 2014, they released a special report 'Detained', which looks at the unjust and often unlawful practice of immigrant detention and, in particular how it impacts on the thousands of women seeking asylum to whom this happens.

Read the full report at:
www.refugeewomen.com

Organisation, Resistance and Support.

Groups such as WAST (Women Asylum Seekers Together in Manchester) MaMA (Migrant Artist Mutual Aid in Liverpool) and LISG (Lesbian immigration Support Group in Manchester and London) organise along principles of mutual aid with migrant activists at the heart of their activity.

"Mutual Aid is not charity, it is a safety net that is based on shared values of justice and equality, it is a safety net that is recession proof, that affirms that even in the toughest times we can stand together to help ourselves...

...If we keep our resources inside of our communities we can create prosperity even when times are difficult."

In October 2013 The UK government in the dark of night loaded at least 8 women from Pakistan onto a charter flight.

The news this week is of a pregnant woman being stoned in front of the courts in Lahore, the UK government paying embassies for travel documents and the systemic violation of the human rights of detainees at Yarl's Wood.

MaMa spent a great deal of time in September 2013 fielding desperate phone calls from Pakistani women inside Yarl's Wood. When I watched the news clip the first time as BBC reported the stoning, I needed to rewind it to check, I thought they said Ghazala, one of the woman removed against her will on that fatefull flight.

MaMa tried to stop the flight. We failed to do that and were only able to ensure the safety of one of our members. MaMa have clarified our vision since then trying to build our skills and intelligence in anti deportation campaigning for women and children.

Women and children migrants and asylum seekers are the most vulnerable to the current racism and xenophobia. Whilst they are the group that elictis the most public empathy, because of their isolation, deporting women and children is ofen the easiest way for the Home Office to fiddle with their 'net migration' figures. We are working to build a collective reslience to this type of extra judicial intimidation.

"We are also singing. Singing to heal ourselves. Singing to wake our communites and our country from their slumber. Singing to remind the world what justice and solidarity mean...Singing for our lives."

Merseyside Refugee & Asylum Seekers Pre & Post Natal Support Group

The aim of MRANG is to provide a full range of services for pre and post natal asylum seeking and refugee women, supporting them in a caring and confidential environment
We are proud to have a team of volunteers with a wealth of experience of working sensitively with women who are victims of trauma and rape in their home countries.
To find out more or offer support visit http://www.mrang.org.uk/

"I believe that if people speak out, then change will come one day. If we do not speak out, then we are dying in silence..."

NO ONE FLIES

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been described as the worst place in the world to be a woman. 1.8 million women have experienced rape and sexual assault in just one year alone, although these figures are likely to be much higher than previous estimates; which amount to 48 women per hour being assaulted. Rape and sexual assault has become shockingly commonplace in the Congo, with many women describing it as "a way of Congolese life".

The DRC has experienced heavy conflict in recent years, with gang rape by armed militia being used as a weapon of war, with young girls and elderly women often targeted. Worryingly, women and not just at risk in conflict zones, a recent domestic violence report carried out in the DRC confirmed women are also at risk of sexual assault at the hands of their partners, with 22% of women reporting being forced to perform sex acts by their partners. Similarly, due to the stigma surrounding victims of rape, women are often forced from their family homes by their husbands after surviving attacks.

WOMEN SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE UK

In February, as the Home Office began detaining dozens of failed asylum seekers from the DRC for forced return, a document was passed to the Observer from the government of the DRC which "urges police, immigration and secret service officials to be on the lookout for asylum seekers who have been forcibly returned." This simply adds to the volume of evidence that anybody who is returned to the DRC is not safe and as a matter of routine policy will be detained and tortured.

Britain has a proud history of fighting for human rights in the Congo. Be part of it. Demand that the home office does not return anybody to the DRC against their will.

Join Migrant Artists Mutual Aid during Refugee Week at the International Slavery Museum Family Friendly Day with music by the MaMa Choir, banner making, and children's games from around the world.
June 28th, 1-4 pm, International Slavery Museum
Albert Dock, Liverpool Waterfront

Migration is not a crime

PROBLEMS WITH THE AUSTRIAN ASYLUM SYSTEM

Visual Vocabulary for the Refugee Protest Vienna
BY KATHERINE BALL

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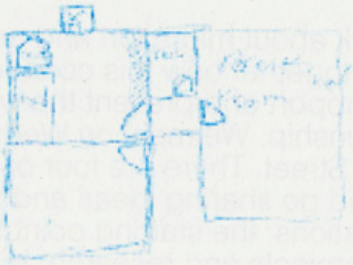
I Was born in



BETWEEN THE BORDERS

in 1988.

Between the Borders Writers Group

We started the writers group to talk about migration and asylum seeking in Liverpool and to explore together how this connects to other ideas. The project hopes to support and present the written work of those with and without citizenship. We meet on Wednesdays at 2pm at Asylum Link on Overbury Street. There are four or five of us normally, but many people come and go sharing ideas and skills. We have had a lot of great conversations, the starting point for many realised and (as of yet) unrealised projects and research. In the first meeting I remember we breezed past discussions on the Farsi poet Hafez Suirazi, Michel Foucault and the Iranian Revolution, the political situation for Kurdish students as well as accounts of marathon journeys to the UK. Asylum Link is a space where these diverse backgrounds and stories meet. As a writers group we hope to communicate the experience of migration to others. We have begun a conversation in which we write collectively, as a group and singularly, as writers. We do not always agree, but we give space for difference.

Unsurprisingly as we started to produce work we talked a lot about language and translation. English I have learnt is frustratingly inconsistent. I have found it difficult to explain grammatical rules that we don't learn at school in England. In the future we hope to make publications multilingual to provide for a wider audience and include the work of a greater number of writers in their language of choosing.

As the writers group has progressed, we have become more aware of how it can function within the concrete needs of asylum seekers and refugees. Though the aspirations behind the publications at the beginning were to engage with discourse around migration, the group also supports the learning of written English, potentially for future jobs. The aims of the writers group have been expanded based on the demands of those without citizenship.

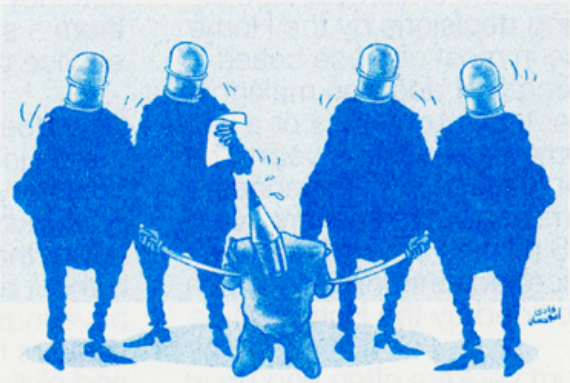
Our weekly meetings have been informal. We usually start with written exercises based on the general language exercises taken from English classes at Asylum Link. These have been useful starting points to explore different written modes and styles. It has been important to include all types of writing including class work which reflects on the experience of migration and impressions of Liverpool. (I remember writing letters of complaint for example, which was a funny exercise and included lots of grievances about food.) More recently we have made up word games and exercises which relate more directly to migration and transiency.

All of us participated in the exercise 'Every Room I Have Ever Slept in Ever' where we wrote descriptions of rooms and drew floor plans. It was interesting to think about personal space when some people have been moved around so much, both in Liverpool and internationally.

The writers group isn't a class. Though some of us share our English language skills, it's important, though not always easy to emphasize horizontaly, which allows people to make decisions about exercises, written content and printing. By establishing the writers group as a long term project we hope to encourage greater participation in the publication. We have also been reminded of the importance of consistency and regularity when establishing a creative project to include those in the often erratic process of asylum seeking. This has been imperative to the writers group and we have tried to maintain a presence at Asylum Link.

In the future however it would also be good to come together in different spaces in the city. We are planning on paying for teas and coffees so we can meet in cafes. It was quite apparent in a recent photographic exhibition of work by asylum seekers: 'Is Liverpool a Welcoming Place for Asylum Seeker and Refugees?', that there were limited spaces open to people due to their financial restrictions. The writers group will attempt to alleviate this by organising more trips and generally doing writing in new locations across Liverpool. Last week the writers group went to 24 Kitchen Street for a poetry workshop. Our activity has been informed by the weekly conversation classes and trips out run by Student Action for Refugees (STAR). The writers group hopes to work with them more closely in future.

This issue of Between the Borders brings together some work of the writers group, sketches of future ideas, favourite cartoons and glimpses of our ongoing conversation.



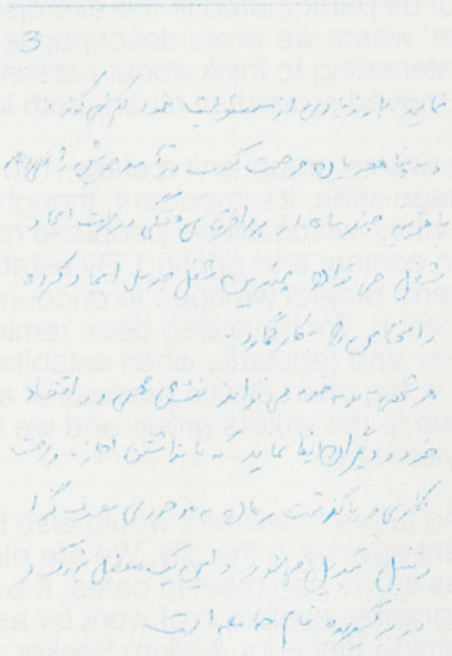
Asylum Seekers and Work.

Who is an asylum seeker? An asylum seeker is someone who has fled their home country and sought protection in any safe country which has signed the 1951 Geneva Convention.

The reasons they leave the country could be due to their political, religious, ethnic or racial difference or war. They all have experiences and different expertise from their home countries.

What is better? To have permission to work and so be useful to the country that they seek protection OR to sit at home not being involved in work or other aspects of the community? Why are asylum seekers, during the time that their case is being dealt with have no permission to work? They are only allowed to live on very minimum support that they receive from the authorities who make decisions about their case. As we are aware of the circumstances of making decisions by the Home Office in most of these cases the length of decision making is longer than six months or a year, in some cases over a year! The result of these circumstances is that most asylum seekers live in NASS (Nation Asylum Support Service) accommodation which is provided by the Home Office.

Asylum seekers often end up at home doing nothing, unable to make decisions and can't work.



This encourages mental and physical illness. They often suffer from depression and anxiety and in some cases they become addicted to drugs. It makes people without any kind of occupation forget all their abilities they had before and makes them a service user rather than service provider.

Why doesn't the government create jobs for asylum seekers? Voluntary or paid so they can contribute towards their support rather than using the service without any contribution. As I have indicated these asylum seekers have their own abilities and skills in whatever they were doing prior to being forced to flee their country.

The longer they stay at home and use the support the more chance there is of them losing their ability to work or learn new skills. These current policies encourage people not to have any responsibility and become a service user. Creation of jobs for migrants people within their own environment as part of the existing service provided to them would be the way forward so they are active and not just dependant.

In conclusion instead of creating restricted, depressed service user we can create jobs and activate people who would affect their own community in which they live, for a better future.

Asylum seeker without status, 1 year and 2 months.

Our Gambian Cultural Heritage Forum, "Wularamang Kachaa Bantaba" (Evening Chat)

My name is Pa Modou Bojang. I am from The Gambia, the smallest country in Africa. A British colony until 1965, it is known as The Smiling Coast of West Africa because of its all year round great weather and the friendliness and hospitality of the people. However in 1994, a group of bandits hijacked this peaceful gem and fledgling Democracy through the barrel of the gun, it has since lost its reputation as one of Africa's most peaceful nations.

This one time Mecca of freedom, democracy, rule of law and human rights, has since descended into chaos and anarchy thanks to its dictatorial and volatile leader Yahya AJJ Jammeh, an infidel for a better word to describe this fool of a President.

Political Pundits the world over have credited him for turning The Smiling Coast and the pride of every Gambian, to The Crying Coast where Tyranny and brutality is the modus operandi.

Since attaining independence in 1965, the Gambia has been a proud member of the Commonwealth of Nations until October 2, 2013 when the country's Boy Scout military-turned-civilian leader unilaterally pulled out of the 53 member group. His action was in retaliation to the Commonwealth's insistence for them to return to true democracy punctuated by respect for human rights and freedoms.

I worked as a journalist on both the radio and newspaper in the Gambia. I began my career in 1998 during as a beat reporter for the Daily Observer. I was sent on assignments in the neighbouring countries like Senegal and Guinea-Bissau to cover conflicts. I threw in my journalistic towel in June 2001 alongside 11 other colleagues at the Daily Observer, in protest against the government's editorial interference.

I also got my share of the dictatorial regime's persistent persecution. I was persecuted for merely serving as a messenger or voice for the voiceless communities. I took the pains of arbitrary arrest, detention without trial and torture to the extent that I fled the country without completing my mission.

The fear of persecution, enforced disappearance or continued detention without trial, resulted to my asylum claim in United Kingdom in September 2009.

I got my home office status in March 2011, and then made the often-difficult transition between a status as an asylum seeker and as a refugee. Since then I have only one dream, which is to accomplish my mission. Through my

experience and passion for radio, and with assistance from the Workers Educational Association (WEA) to do some training, I began a radio project to assist other refugees in my shoes to have a voice. The idea was to....

....train skilful asylum seekers and refugees to be able to produce and present their own radio program in their own language for their own audience in their various countries of origin so to effect positive change.

This project taught me a lot and led me research on Gambian online radio in the Diaspora, which I found were mainly hosting political shows, while ignoring culture and society. I wanted to start a program to fill this gap as I felt that there were lots of Gambians, not only in UK, but across the globe, who would be very interested. This was when I launched a program called Wularamang Kachaa (Evening Chat) on Kibaaro Radio.

The motivation of the show is to promote our own cultural heritage as many Gambians are now living in the UK, Europe, USA and other parts of the world with and without their families. Many will be interested to have this cultural show that might benefit themselves and their children, especially those born outside the Gambia. The program looks at words and their meaning in Mandinka language, which is spoken by the majority tribes in The Gambia. It is not a tribal or ethnic show, but It recognises that 90% of Gambians speak Mandinka. I present the program in Mandinka so that parents in the Diaspora will participate in the show and engage with the importance of maintaining and promoting our own culture and traditional values that are considered not harmful. Having observed that children born to both Gambian parents, yet in another country, rarely speak their mother tongue and when they go back to the Gambia, they find it very hard to interact with other kids or their grandparents.

This inspires me to teach NKO in the show through the radio. NKO is the written "Mandinka", its alphabet was invented by professor Sulaymane Kante in April 1949, and since then the language has been considered equal to other written international languages. However many people do not know this, as it has been neglected from our school curriculum in the Gambia itself. "Nko" translates into "I say" and is taught now at Harvard and Kairo Universities in the USA and Egypt respectively.

Since the inception of the program in November 2013, it has attracted thousands of listeners across the globe including our home country, The Gambia. It is a live phone in program and so many people have now subscribed to our distant learning through the radio with our "Nko" language teacher, Karamo Jammeh based in Sweden.

I have discovered that despite the easier accessibility of the programme on smartphones

as Kibaaro Radio can be accessed through the TuneIn App, available for download on most smart phones or Pads, which many Gambians are now in possession of,

...People still prefer listening to the programme in groups or Bantabas (Forum). This provides them the opportunity to talk about the programme, discuss it, debate and learn from it.

I have also learnt that the programme is popular, as people feel confident to listen to it without any fear of being arrested by the country's most feared National Intelligence Agency (NIA), as the programme does not discuss any politics.

It has now grown to a point that it has a community of its own, whose members are responsible for the direction it takes.

I am considered the "Alkolo" (head) of the program and also the producer and the presenter, while Mr Lamin Jersey of Birmingham, UK, coordinates the program. Mr. Kebba Landing Sonko, who reads the regular Sukuwos (poems) and Taalingo's (stories) on the program, is considered the Commissioner of the community. Mr. Ebrima Darboe of Sweden is considered the Chief of the program, whilst Imam Seedy Ali Janneh, the Gambian Imam of Gutenberg, Sweden, is considered the Imam of the community.

The program is popular due to its exclusion of divisive topics. It has succeeded in uniting people of different political opinions and religions who all come to the program and educate each other without dispute or hatred.

"It is purely an educational programme about the Mandinka Language and Culture". Since the program began, I have received more than 3000 friends' requests to my Skype contact details of 'princegambia', which is also the main contact detail I use to host the programme. I have also received calls **on the program from participants in countries in which I didn't think any Gambians were residing.Among all these other positives I am thrilled that the program has assisted in re-uniting many old friends from the Gambia, who have not seen or heard from each other in a very long time.**

Wularamang Kachaa is broadcast live on Kibaaro Radio in the evenings from 7.30pm GMT to 10.30pm GMT, Saturday-Sunday to Tuesday-

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Lampedusa, the hidden gateway to Europe

Far far from the eyes of politicians and citizens of the European Union there is an island in the middle of the Mediterranean, that not many have heard of, but that each year receives tens of thousands of migrants, as well as collects from the sea the bodies and holds the funeral of an equal number of them. This is Lampedusa, a place where the European Union and Italy have decided to hide the atrocities of neo-liberal and migratory policies of the Union and to leave a few hundred fishermen and activists alone with the weight of the tragedies that they produce.

The Island

Lampedusa is a 25 sq km island situated between Italy and Tunisia, and is nearest European territory to reach for those who flee from sub-Saharan Africa and the middle-east through Tunisia and Libya. The island has historically been a point of reference for travellers of all kind, who used it as a resting point, so that on the island there is a sanctuary that allows Catholics and Muslims to worship at the same time. In recent years, however, the island is notorious for its detention centres and for the countless deaths around its coasts, and it has been chosen by Italy and the EU as a strategic point for managing migration flows in the Mediterranean. This is because the island is very far from the coast and it is easy to hide what happens there. This strategy is not a new one, since the island was used by the Italian government as a place to isolate anarchists and all kind of "enemies of the state" during the last years of 1800 and the first of 1900. Among the many as well Gaetano Bresci and Errico Malatesta.

Key role of the island in the geopolitical Mediterranean

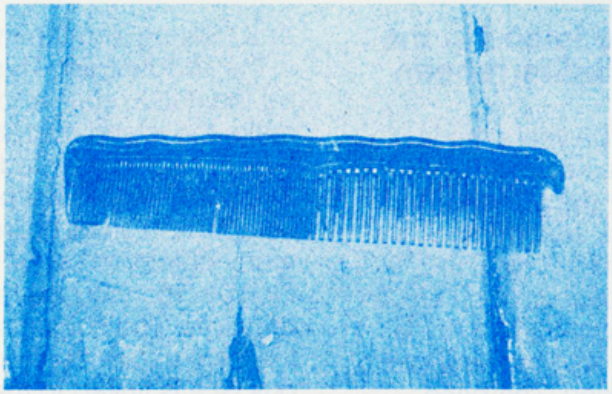
During the last 50 years the island has played a key role, by the United States, for the geopolitical control of the area, as well as Sicily. In Lampedusa, in fact, since 1972 there is a NATO base called LORAN (Long Range Navigation), whose signals can control all movements in the Mediterranean. The base, however, is only one of the 15 NATO bases in Sicily (and 113 in Italy!!), and this figure is enough to understand the strategic importance of the region for the Atlantic control of the area. The most recent is the one in Niscemi, completed in January 2014, which has a technology called MUOS (Mobile User Objective System) a very powerful radar system that will allow the control of the drones across the east- Europe and middle-east area. This powerful technology presents high risks for the inhabitants, especially because the area is densely populated. The other 3 MUOS installation in the world are all far away from densely populated areas.

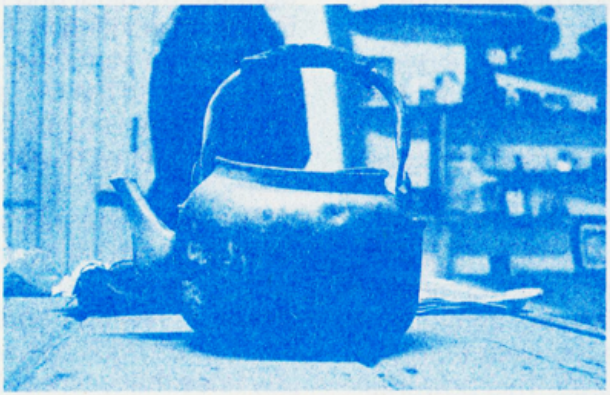
It's strategic role in the management of migrant flows

Since the mid-80's the main migration flows (through the sea) were those from Morocco and Algeria to the south of Spain and, due to the Balkan war, from the coast of the former Yugoslavia to the east Italy. From the mid-90's, however, most of the flows coming from the sea has concentrated on the coasts of Sicily and Lampedusa in particular, especially in recent years due to the Arab Spring and the many conflicts in the Middle East. This has prompted the Italian state and the EU to make the island a strategic point of flow control in the Mediterranean. Since 1998 the government has established, in all Italian territory many detention centres, in order to lock up, identify and reject irregular migrants. The subjects working in the centres are the Red Cross, various NGOs linked to the government agenda, medical and military staff. Everyone working in the centres must sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of interior and so there is no possibility of independent work within them.

The Italian centres have been deemed many times, from large NGOs like Amnesty to the European Union, as having degrading and inhumane conditions was forced to pay fines many times. In addition, organisations responsible for the management of the centres have been repeatedly condemned by the Italian courts, for having held migrants for more than the legal time permitted by law (between 48 and 72 hours). This is because they actually receive public money for each day migrants are detained receiving around 40 to 50 euros! Of course barely any of this money is spent on services or food and conditions in the centres are horrible. Many migrants have remained there for weeks on end. With the collaboration of police the centres try as hard as possible to keep migrants inside.

This management of migration has been called "the business of hospitality," where a series of

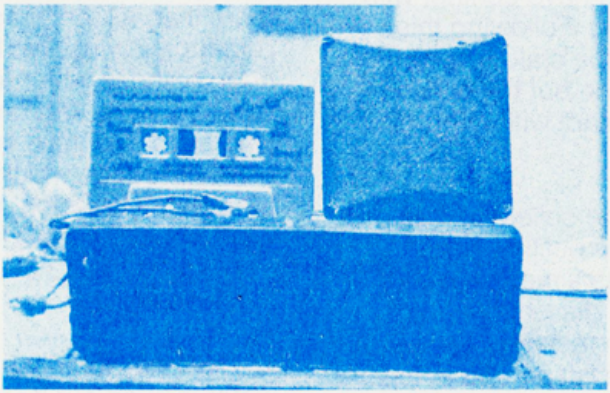




organisations, private businesses and institutions directly gaining from the management of the flows. From these organisations there is little interest to improve or put an end to the arrival of migrants from the sea. In other words a strict dependency relations between this phenomenon and the economic survival of many associations, NGOs, businesses and institutions.

With regards to migrants, when they arrive on the island they are locked up in the detention centre and forced to give fingerprints (due to the Dublin Agreements applicants for asylum must do so the country in which thy arrive) even though many of them would not want to stay in Italy but head to north Europe. Before they can access the asylum procedure they stay a long time in the centre, and this is a big violation of the Italian law since they are imprisoned without having committed any crime. For all the ones not allowed to enter the asylum procedure the only solution is a forced repatriation.

Information on Lampedusa has always been used by the Italian Government to justify racist and repressive policies. For example, the number of "irregular" migrants arriving by sea is much less than those that do land with a valid visa.



However the images of overloaded boats is used by newspapers and political parties to shout "invasion", spread paranoia and meet their election needs. Italy is currently in the 49th place in the world ranking of press freedom (World Press Freedom Index 2014, Reporters San Frontiers), after Haiti and Niger. Nothing else is required to demonstrate how unreliable and slaved to big powers Italian press is.

The last thing that makes sense to describe is how the tragedies in the Mediterranean are used by the European Union to finance programs of militarisation and the European agencies (eg. Mare Nostrum and Frontex) with the stated task of saving migrants at sea but with the practical goal of draining millions of Euros towards military spending. Thus increasing geopolitical and economical control of the north Africa and the repression of migrants flows, rather than facilitating the path of everyone wanting to leave in a safe way.

Askavusa collective and its activities.

Askavusa is a local collective doing political direct actions and cultural activities. During the years 2008 and 2009, when thousands of migrants were landing on the

island the collective was providing first aid, legal support and whatever they needed, since police and institutions were clearly insufficient to handle the volume of arrivals. During those months the collective has been repeatedly intimidated by the police, the office searched and some members threatened because of the emancipatory and alternative way they provided hospitality. Following this, from that time, the state has ensured that no one but the police could have contact with migrants arriving. Following this, from that time, the state has ensured that no one but the police could have contact with migrants arriving.

In light of this the collective has been involved in political and cultural activities aimed at raising awareness and dissemination of information with respect to what happens on the island and in the Mediterranean sea. The group organizes a film festival each year, with which they try to keep the light on the tragedies involving the area.

They also have a space where they sort and displayed objects that migrants have lost at sea during the crossing. Through this we try to put back some of the humanity that has been stripped from this situation.

We believe that the relationship with the objects belonged to migrants allow us to keep their memory alive more than all the images that newspapers show us. We believe they enable, those who have faced the same journey, and hopefully those who havn't, to have an experience of identification which is needed for real compassion. We feel we died with our sisters the night of the 3rd October 2013 off the coasts of Lampedusa.

We feel the Koran we found in the water is even our Koran, as is that toothbrush and that water bottle. This feeling of identification through these objects helps us to bridge the space between Us and Them, and feel part of the tragedies taking place thousands of miles away from our eyes and our heart.

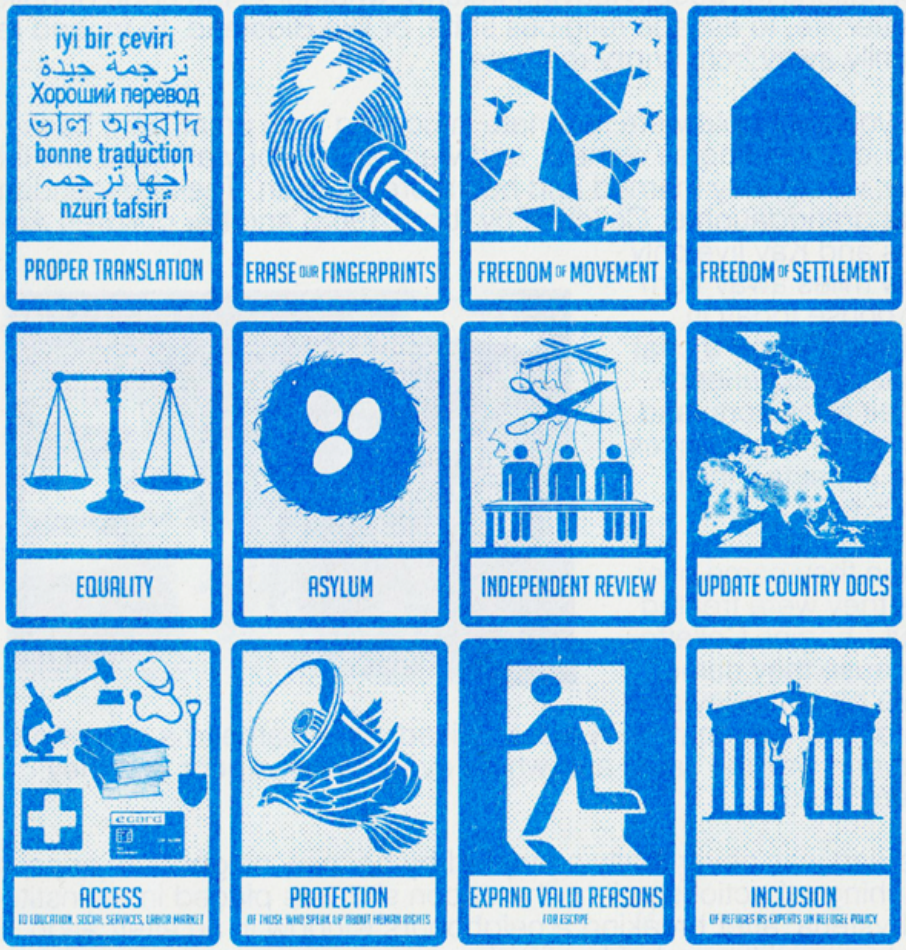
www.lampedusainfestival.com/bando/2014-english.html

www.askavusa.wordpress.com

Look out for an afternoon of selected films from ***Lampedusa in Festival.*** Hosted by the ***Liverpool Radical Dcoumentary Festival*** team.
Sunday 6th July, 3pm-6pm.
The Gregson Institute, Community Centre.
Garmoyle Road, L15 3HN Liverpool
The Event is Free and refreshments will be available.

Together we will rise!

THE DEMANDS OF THE STRIKING REFUGEES



Visual Vocabulary for the Refugee Protest Vienna
BY KATHERINE BALL

Three Generations Later:

A Look at Irish Migrant Assimilation in the early 20th century

Unmarried and pregnant in the first decade of the 20th century, a young couple known to us only by their surnames; Bidstead and Prenderghast, were forced to flee family outrage in Waterford, Ireland. They came to Liverpool with the hope of finding a new home for themselves. It's a familiar story, Liverpool at the time was one of the first destinations for people leaving Ireland, whether in the hope of building a better life, to escape religious strife, or like Bidstead, to try and raise a family away from angry relatives.

The young couple were fortunate in coming from an affluent background of race horse owners, and were able to buy a house on Hall Lane, where they married and had more children. Their descendants, great granddaughter Collette Foy (born 1965) and her children Ant, Chris and Kay live only a few miles away from that house today in Anfield. We had a chat about the experience of their ancestors, and how these experiences have impacted their own lives.

"When they came over here they were treated awful," begins Collette "Because they came with a bit of money and with different accents they weren't liked. They came to a city where everyone was the same and where everyone was poor and they weren't liked."

Bidstead was never really accepted by her new neighbours or country. Reaching a fractious point, whereupon she was placed in an institution for 'hysteria' after breaking a neighbours window in an altercation. She was to spend the rest of her life there.

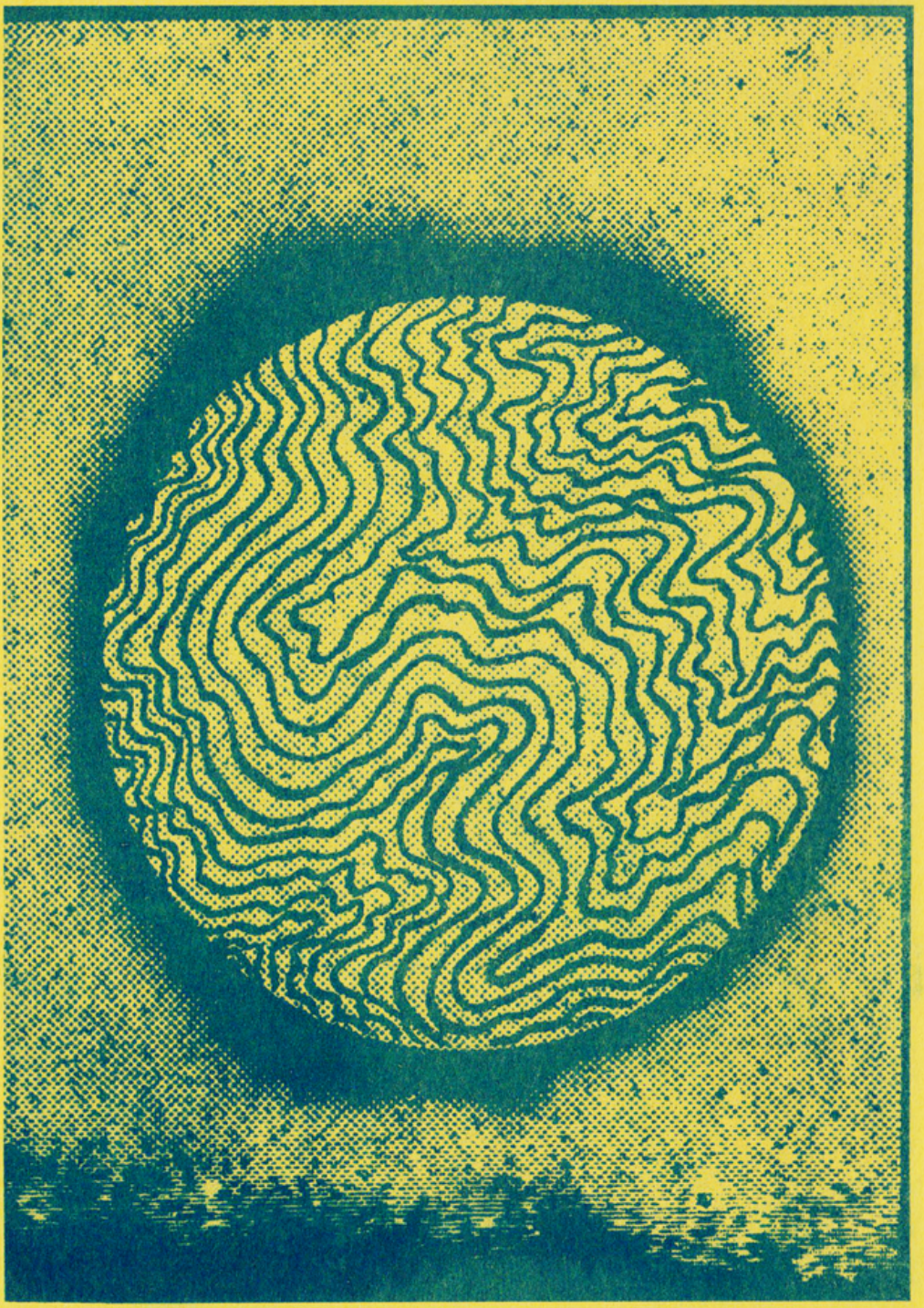
Collette sees their experience as encompassing both race and class. "Because of the potato famine they were all coming over here, and to be honest, they would have been better staying where they were, the way they were treated", recollecting signs outside pubs saying "No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs", as the tip of the iceberg.

It's strange to hear this considering how enthusiastically many residents celebrate their Irish heritage each St Patrick's Day. "I get annoyed...Scousers today go on about being Irish, but they don't know anything about the history, they don't know anything about their heritage. It's just a piss up. Let's not all make out we're celebrating our Irish heritage, because half of you don't even know it...but there isn't much in my generation now, you'll see those little aspects of Irishness. My generation is third generation and I'm just Scouse, through and through" Even their surname has been Anglicised, changed to Foy from Foyner.

Religious differences opened cracks between Liverpool's various communities. Collettes eldest son, Ant mentions the Orange Lodge, a Protestant loyalist group known for it's marches in the city. She recalls, "When I was a little girl we used to live on Walton Road and that was predominantly Catholic. Every 12th of July, when they had the parade, everyone would go to the bottom of the street and sit on the wall, and when all the lodgers would go past, there'd be murder! They be throwing all kinds, shouting all kinds of abuse! People would go down there just to have murder."

Growing up with a stern father, Collette was taught not to ask many questions about their world, and to be distrustful of newcomers to the city. "For 40 years I was conditioned...I always felt like I didn't know I was". Today she a practising Buddhist and our conversation ends on a philosophical note "Humanity has never changed as regards to how people treat other people they regard as lesser".

Photographs oi Irish migrants in the 20th Century. Private Archive

old pier head
passport office

I want to speack and write it very good
because my life is ~~in~~ here.
I am ~~beging~~ beginning a new life and my life is changing.